



Reducing the Harm of Grief Through Resilience-building

Hawaii Health &
Harm Reduction Center
Heather Lusk, LCSW
www.hhhrc.org



HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION CENTER
The New Chapter for Life Foundation and The CHOW Project

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center(HHHRC)

Reducing harm, promoting health, creating wellness and fighting stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center serves Hawai'i communities by reducing the harm and fighting the stigma of HIV, hepatitis, homelessness, substance use, mental illness, and poverty in our community. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, drug use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities. We foster health, wellness, and systemic change in Hawai'i and the Pacific through care services, advocacy, training, prevention, education, and capacity building.



Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC)

OUR VALUES

- ***HARM REDUCTION:*** A non-judgmental approach to public health that meets people where they are and celebrates positive change, with the goal of minimizing the harms of actions that pose adverse social and health outcomes.
- ***RESPECT:*** To honor the dignity of others by recognizing difference and fostering peaceful coexistence.
- ***ADVOCACY:*** An uncompromising dedication to eliminating the stigmas and systemic injustices impacting the communities we serve and represent.



Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC)

OUR VALUES

- ***QUALITY CARE:*** Individualized health care and social services that demonstrate best practices and improve desired health outcomes. In order to achieve this, services must be evidence-based, safe, effective, timely, efficient, equitable, and people-centered.
- ***COMPASSION:*** The motivation to alleviate suffering from a place of empathy, kindness, and receptiveness to the lived experience of others.
- ***INTEGRITY:*** Commitment to building relationships founded in honesty, trust, accountability, and transparency.



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CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM



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CHRONIC DISEASE



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MENTAL HEALTH



**SUBSTANCE
USE**



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HOUSELESSNESS



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HOUSELESSNESS



**CRIMINAL
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MENTAL HEALTH



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HHHRC Services

Street-based Services

Outreach & Linkage to Services

Wound Care

Syringe Exchange

Naloxone Distribution

HIV/HCV/STD Testing

HIV/HCV Case Mgmt &

Care Coordination

Law Enforcement Assisted

Diversion

(LEAD)



Warm Hand Off Referrals

Wound Care*

Buprenorphine*

HIV/HCV Testing, Case Management* & Care Coordination**

Transgender Services**

Mental Health

Smoking Cessation

LEAD

*referral form at www.hhhrc.org

**often can transport/meet



Focus on Harm Reduction

- **HARM REDUCTION:** A non-judgmental approach to public health that meets people where they are and celebrates positive change, with the goal of minimizing the harms of actions that pose adverse social and health outcomes.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

HR Theories:

- **Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change (Stages of Change)**
- **Trauma-informed Care**
- **Motivational Interviewing**
- **Hierarchy of Needs**

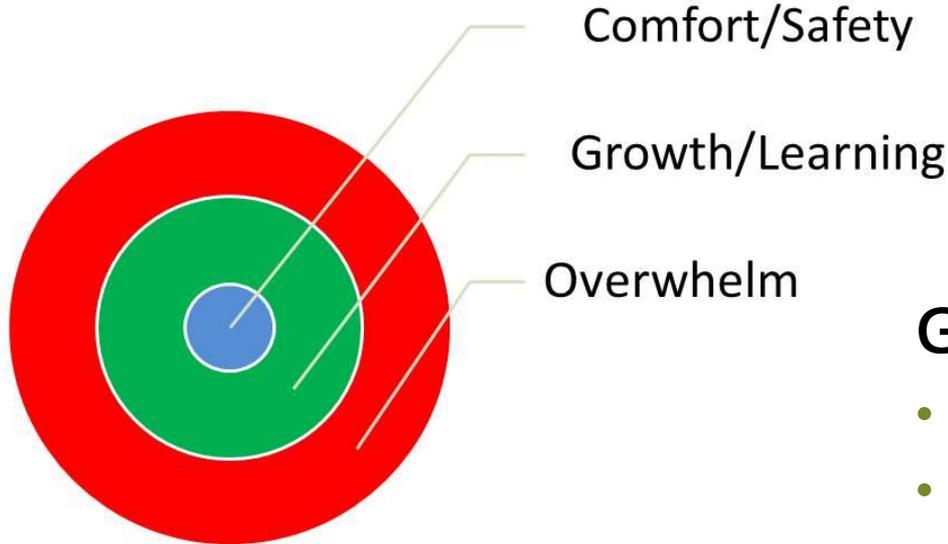
Agenda

- Overview of grief, loss and trauma
- Resilience and post-traumatic growth
- Intersection of grief and homelessness
- Grief stages and theories
- Supporting those who are grieving
- Resources

*"Grief is the price
we pay for love."*

—QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

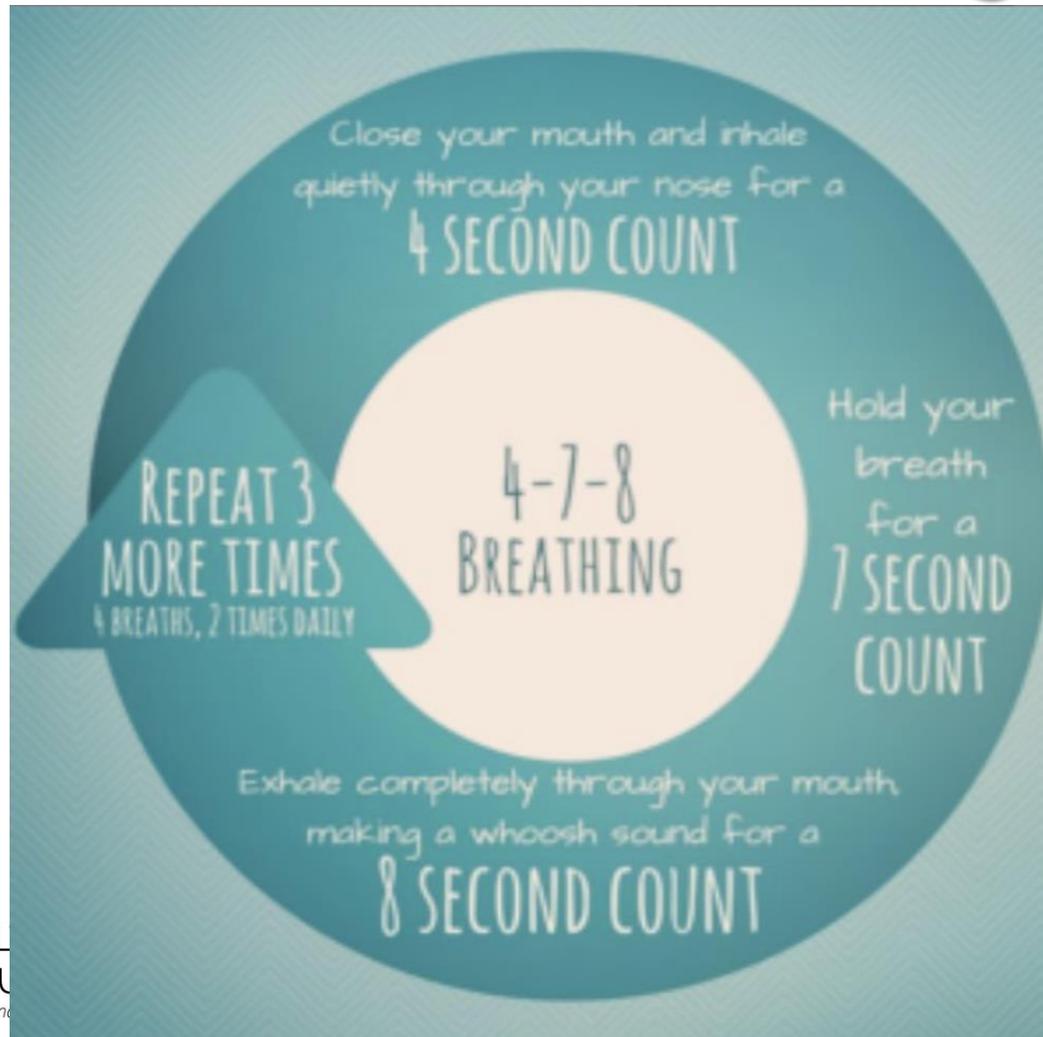


Grounding exercises:

- Soles of the feet
- Five senses
- Focus on breath or 4-7-8 breathing
- Talk with someone



Grounding and De-activating 4-7-8 breathing



Mahalo to Our House Grief Support Center!

<https://www.ourhouse-grief.org/>



The Bad News

Trauma and Grief are Universal

- **Trauma is universal**
 - 70% of adults experience at least one traumatic event and 1 in 5 will have PTSD
- **Mental health challenges are up**
 - 1 in 4 of us are actively struggling with anxiety, depression, grief – increased in COVID era
- **The houseless experience is defined by a series of catastrophic losses**

How do we avoid death, dying and grief?

- Ignore, not discuss
- Euphemisms
- Toxic positivity
- Agency policies
- Others



? When a person is born we rejoice, and when they're married we jubilate, but when they die we try to pretend nothing has happened.

— Margaret Mead —

AZ QUOTES

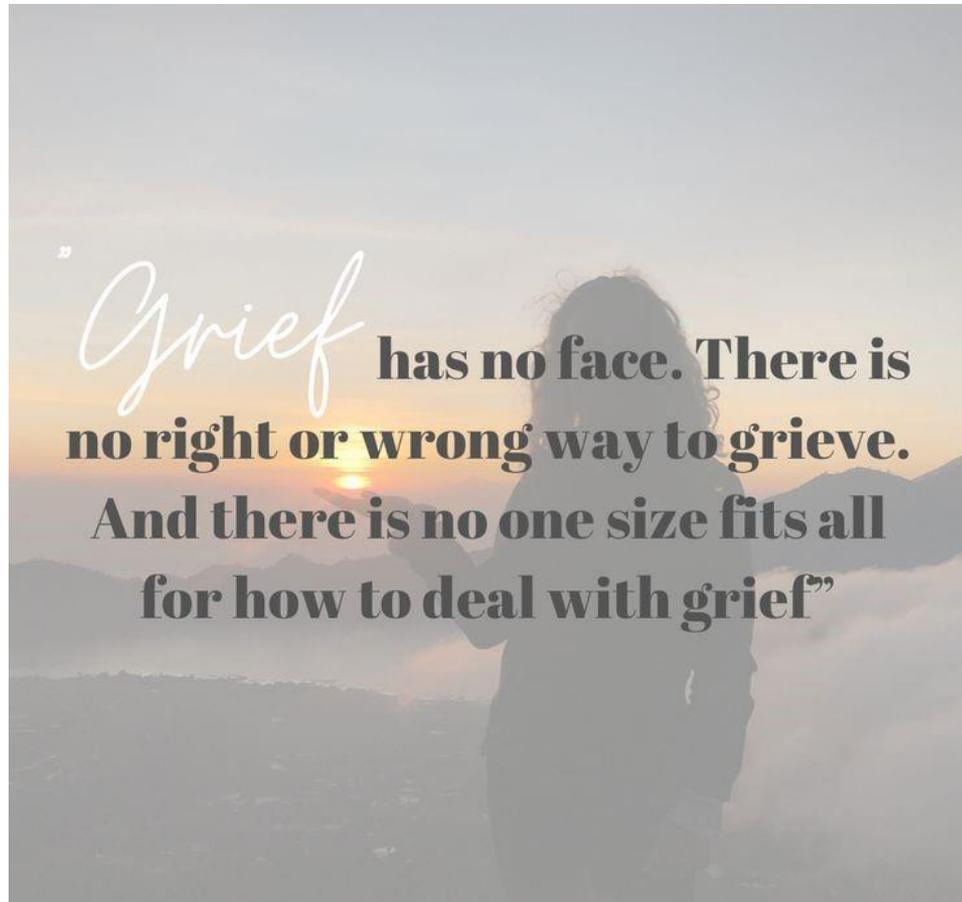
What is Grief?

- **Grief:** Internal response, feelings and thoughts that happen after a loss
- **Mourning:** The outward response and ways we adapt to the loss
- **Bereavement:** An undefined period of time in which grief and mourning take place after a death



Grief can be experienced

- Emotionally
- Physically or behaviorally
- Cognitively
- Spiritually



Types of Grief (not exhaustive list)

- Anticipatory grief – grieving prior to loss
 - Ambiguous loss – loss and grief without closure or psychological loss
 - Complicated grief – acute grief symptoms persist and adaptation process is slowed with invasive thoughts and/or images
 - Collective grief – loss on group level
 - Cumulative grief – loss after loss after loss
- Chronic grief, delayed grief, traumatic grief



Grief and Major Depression (DSM 5)

- **Uncomplicated bereavement – natural reaction to loss of loved one**
 - Depression as “normal” part of grief process
 - Grief hallmark impact is emptiness and loss with waves of dysphoria
- **Prolonged grief disorder**
 - 12 months since death
 - At least 3 symptoms experienced every day for 3 months which impairs functioning

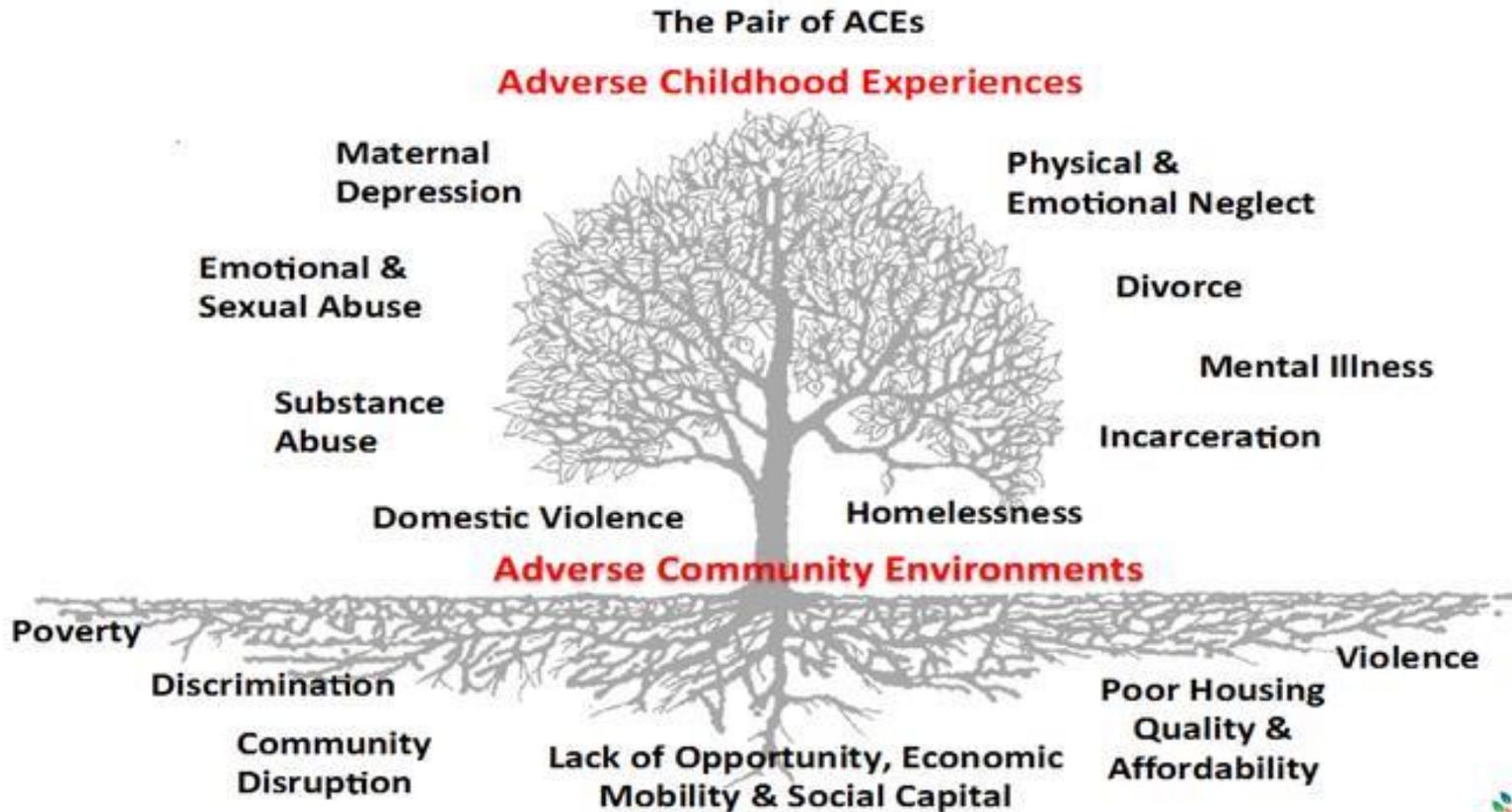
What is Trauma?

SAMHSA Definition: “Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being”

Traumatic Loss

- **Traumatic death – occur in a manner that is unanticipated, shocking or violent**
 - Overwhelms the person's ability to cope
 - May include survivor's guilt
- **Survivors of traumatic deaths experience less social support and increased stigma**
 - Often others focus on how the person died and not the supporting survivor – or avoid all together

Trauma



Ellis W., Dietz W. BCR Framework *Academic Peds* (2017)



Building Community Resilience

6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

The CDC's **Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (OPHPR)**, in collaboration with SAMHSA's **National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC)**, developed and led a new training for OPHPR employees about the role of trauma-informed care during public health emergencies. The training aimed to increase responder awareness of the impact that trauma can have in the communities where they work. Participants learned SAMHSA'S six principles that guide a trauma-informed approach, including:



Adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any single particular technique or checklist. It requires constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity, and possibly a cultural change at an organizational level. On-going internal organizational assessment and quality improvement, as well as engagement with community stakeholders, will help to imbed this approach which can be augmented with organizational development and practice improvement. The training provided by **OPHPR** and **NCTIC** was the first step for CDC to view emergency preparedness and response through a trauma-informed lens.

Post-Traumatic Growth

Brutally Honest Optimism

Optimism reduces our sense of helplessness when things feel out of control. It also allows motivates us to take constructive action. However this is not the Pollyanna, unicorns and rainbows, "everything's going to be okay" brand of optimism - it is tempered by the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of our current reality.

Perception of Control Over Events

What makes an experience traumatic is that we were not able to control the circumstances that led to us being harmed in some way. Recovery is about regaining control through primary control (taking action to change a situation) or secondary control (changing our orientation to a situation).

4 Factors Leading to Post-Traumatic Growth

Coping Style

What is your coping style? Do you immediately start problem-solving (active coping) or do you escape into a fantasy world (avoidance coping)? Both approaches can be helpful, but in the long term, avoidance turns into denial, which prevents you from ever truly living in the present because you are so busy stuffing down your past. The best predictor of post-traumatic growth is 'acceptance and positive reinterpretation' - a coping style characterized by optimism and humor.

Strong Sense of Self

Having a strong sense of self depends on having a purpose in life, high self-esteem, and being able to create a coherent narrative. Without being able to make sense of our story, we cannot integrate it, learn from it, or get a distance from it. A coherent narrative prevents us from unconsciously repeating the lack of connection we experienced with our parents in our relationship with our own children.

Post-Traumatic Growth



5 Domains of Post-Traumatic Growth

Personal Strength

- Stronger for the experience
- Better able to handle blows
- More wisdom and maturity

Closer Relationships

- Strengthened social ties - can rely on people
- Help craft trauma narratives that contribute to meaning
- Sense of belonging
- Unity

Greater Appreciation for Life

- Greater gratitude, hope, kindness, leadership, love, spirituality, and teamwork

New Possibilities

- Reprioritize values and time commitments
- Accomplish goals that would have been delayed
- More understanding of friends and family

Spiritual Development

- Readjust spiritual beliefs to encompass trauma, or
- Revise spiritual beliefs altogether



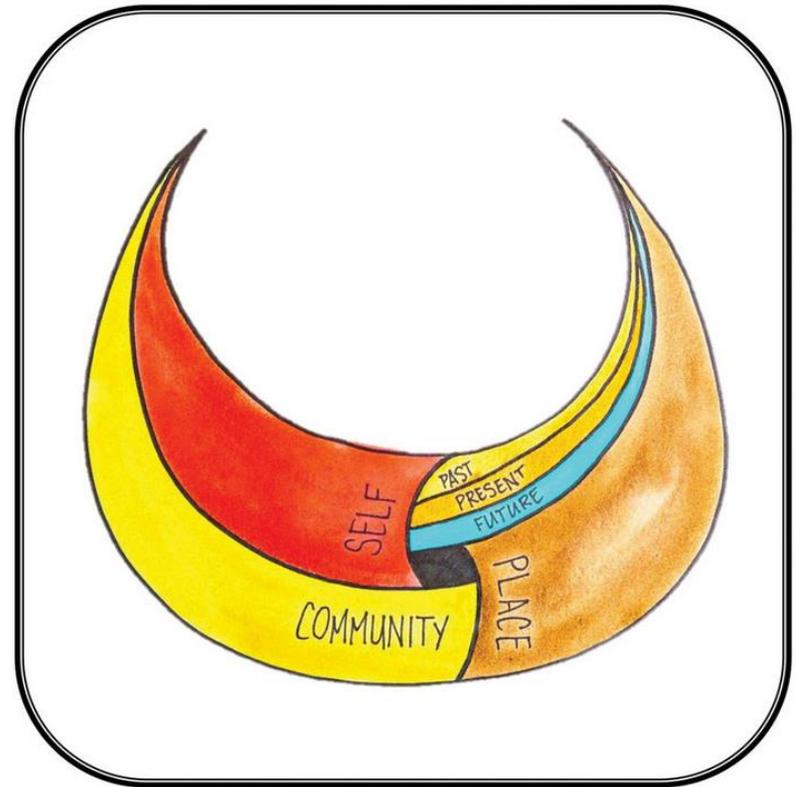
The Good News: Science Supports Wellness and Resilience



Eight standard domains of western concept of wellness



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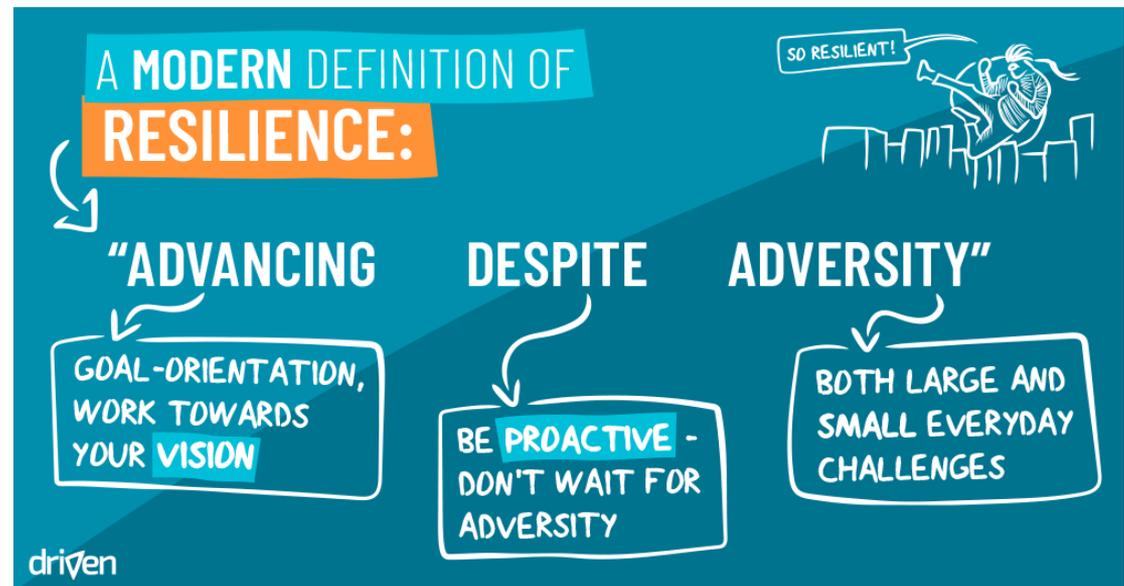


Pilināhā: The Four Connections Framework -An indigenous perspective to health and healing.

Pilināhā
Indigenous framework for
health and wellness

What is Resilience?

- Webster: ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change
- APA: process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences



Resilience Strategies With Evidence

- Breathing exercises
- Meditation or prayer
- Gratitude
- Laughing
- Savoring
- Self-compassion
- Forgiveness and letting go
- Movement
- Journaling

Having at least one meaningful connection with another person has strongest correlation with resilience

Loss, Trauma and Resilience Related to Homelessness

- **Loss often contributes to homelessness**
 - Loss of job, loss of home, loss of family/loved ones
 - Higher levels of trauma such as violence, abuse
- **While houseless - loss of identity, security and safety, loss of possessions, animals**
- **Loss of connection with layers of discrimination and stigma (loss of dignity)**
 - Connection is key resilience factor for post-traumatic growth



Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Stages of Grief

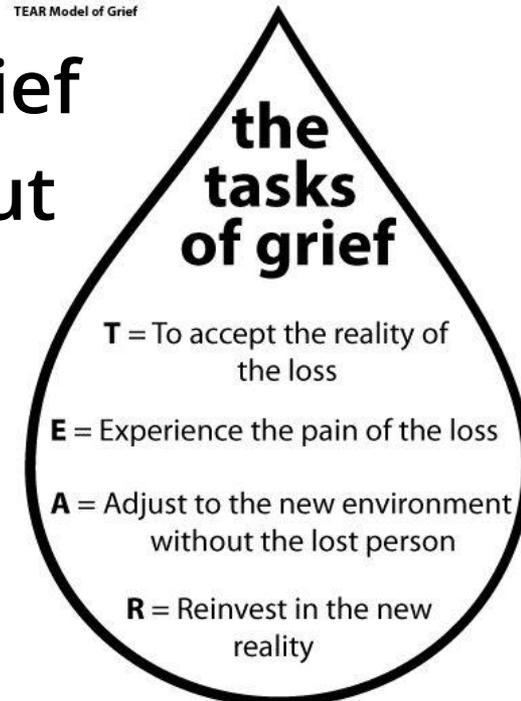
- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance



Worden's Four Tasks of Mourning

- Task 1: Accept Reality of the Loss
- Task 2: To Process the Pain and Grief
- Task 3: To Adjust to a World without the Deceased
- Task 4: To find an enduring connection with deceased while embarking on a new life

TEAR Model of Grief



Culture and Grief

Cultural humility – lifelong commitment to learning about cultural identities

- **Culture and the meaning of death**
- **Cultural rituals regarding death**
 - How people care for those approaching death
 - How bodies are handled after death
 - Grieving quietly or loudly and publicly (and length)
- **Personal difference in grief and mourning**



Savoring

- **Rick Hanson: our brain is like velcro for bad things and teflon for good things**
 - Survival brain
 - Neurons that fire together, wire together
- **If you can savor a positive experience for 90 seconds, you will be more likely to remember/recall it, build neuropathways**



There is no right or wrong way to grieve

Things Grieving People Do That May Seem Strange but Are Actually Very Common

Find most movies and TV shows unbearable, and then proceed to watch the few 'safe' options on repeat



Seek out intimacy and/or sex, or avoid it altogether



Lash out at friends and strangers, like slow walkers or people who breathe too loudly



Wear the same clothes for weeks on end



Have a hard time mustering up energy to respond to texts, calls, emails, and basically all forms of communication

Talk about it to everyone all the time



Not talk about it at all

Hey, how are you?

Fine, thanks.

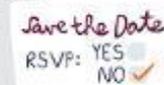
Anything new?

Nope.

Have nightmares and/or dreams in which they're still alive



Skip out on holidays, celebrations, and basically all social occasions



Lose track of time



The Waves of Grief

Grief is like the ocean,
it comes in waves,
ebbing and flowing.
Sometimes the water is
calm, and sometimes it
is overwhelming. All we
can do is learn to swim.

Vicki Harrison

- Intense sorrow, pain and rumination over the loss of your loved one.
- Focus on little else but your loved one's death.
- Extreme focus on reminders of the loved one or excessive avoidance of reminders.
- Intense and persistent longing or pining for the deceased.
- Problems accepting the death.
- Numbness or detachment.



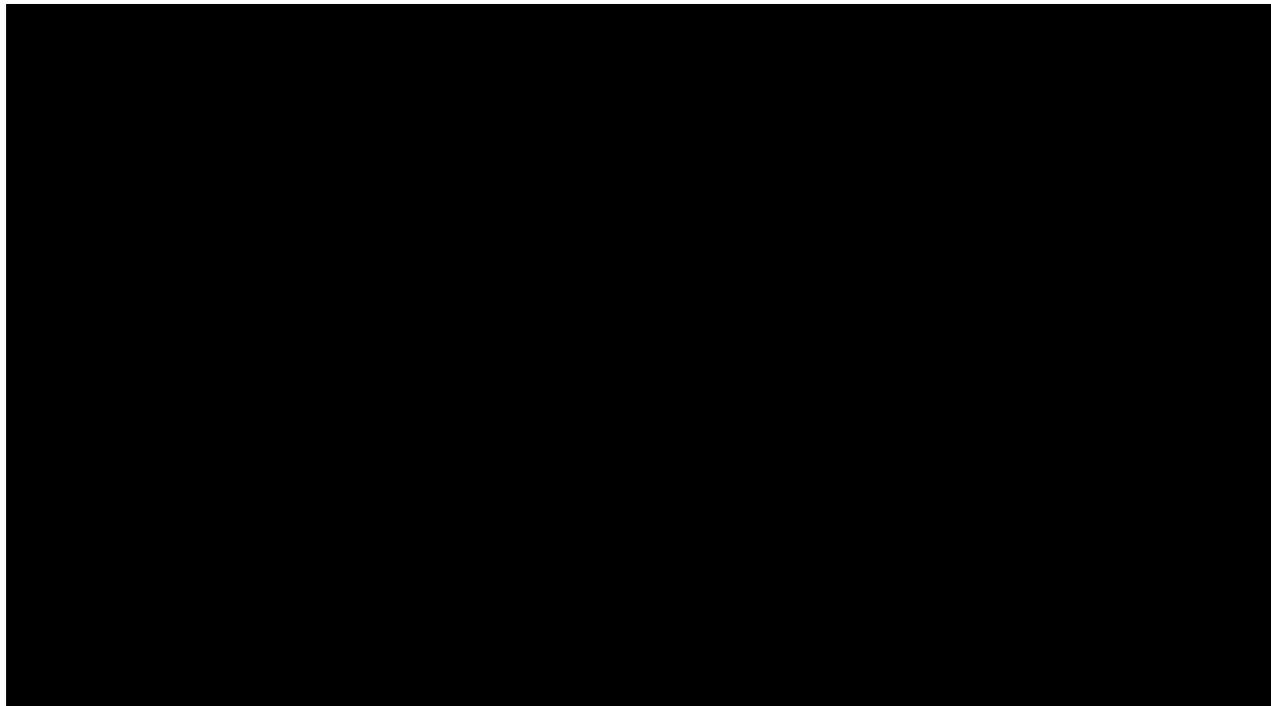
Mindful Grieving

- Accept feelings – allow whatever feelings arise without judgement
- Express feelings – talking, moving, journaling, art
- Reach out – balance between taking time for yourself and being with others
- Continue to take care of yourself and others – routines help
- Celebrate your loved one's life

How to support those who are grieving

- **Reach out and offer support – follow lead**
 - Don't wait, and be aware of “let me know what I can do” as puts pressure on griever but offer help with practical tasks
- **Listen and allow silence**
- **Respect the person's way of grieving**
- **Be aware of body language and voice tone – offer words from the heart**
- **Stay with feelings – resist temptation to try and fix or give advice**





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What not to do

- Don't compare to your experience or share about your loss unless asked
- Don't be sensationalist or focus on details of death
- Don't only focus on positive or put positive spin (toxic positivity)
- Don't say anything that may diminish
- Don't change subject or not follow their lead
- Be aware of pushing your faith if not shared



Empathy



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Possible Questions

- Tell me about your history with grief
- How has this death/loss impacted you physically, emotionally, cognitively spiritually?
- What brings you comfort in your grief?
- What issues have you been dealing with as a result of the death or loss?
- How has your grief changed over time?



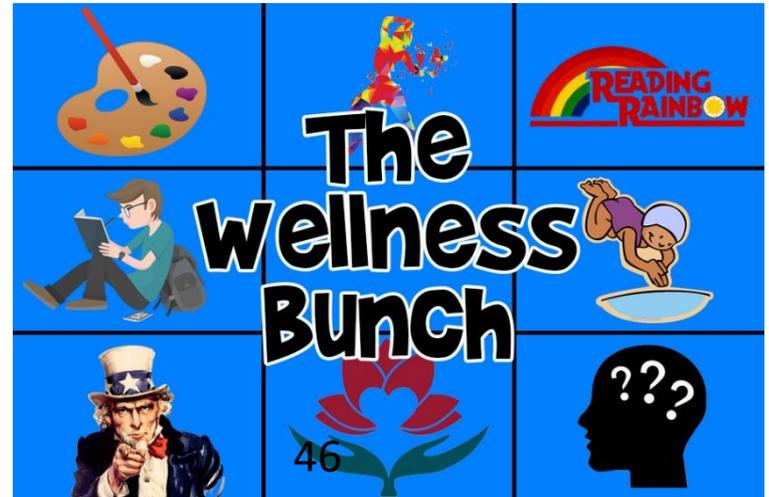
Agency Support for Grief

This work is hard!

- **Accumulative grief, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma are common**
 - Wellness activities
 - Celebrations and memorials for those who have died – “say their name”
 - Flexible time off and bereavement leave
 - Grief support groups and EAP

Wellness Options at HHHRC

- Self-care plan
- Regular supervision
- Clinical supervision
- Wellness Committee
 - Cultural events, potlucks, all-staff gatherings
- One hour a week of worktime for wellness activities
- Healthcare flex savings plan
- Headspace app for meditation



Art Therapy



Zumba



Yoga



Walking in Sunshine



Lei Making



Resilience is Connection!



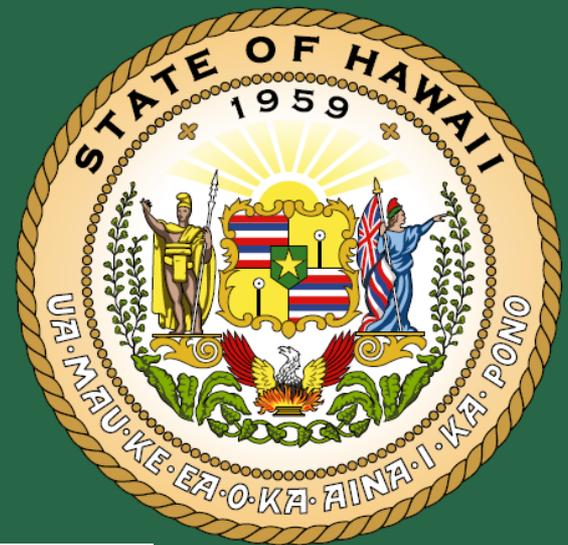
Office of Wellness & Resilience

Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.
Director Tia L. R. Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA

Get in touch!

Office: (808) 586-0004

Email: gov.owr@hawaii.gov



Tia Roberts Hartsock, director of the Office of Wellness and Resilience

Office of Gov. Josh Green /



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Grief Resources in Hawaii

- **Kokua Mau**
<https://kokuamau.org/grief-and-bereavement/>
- **Hawaii Psychological Association
Bereavement Resources**
<https://hawaiipsychology.org/page-1862168>
- **Bereavement Network of Hawaii**
<https://kokuamau.org/wp-content/uploads/Bereavement-network-of-Hawaii.pdf>
- **Nā Keki O Emilia**
<https://nkoemaui.org/resources/>



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